

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BLANTY 00592 031953Z

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FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7023

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO, MZ, MI

SUBJ: PRESIDENT BANDA SPEAKS ON EVENTS IN PORTUGAL

1. PRESIDENT BANDA HELD RARE "PRESS CONFERENCE" MAY 3 WHICH CONSISTED OF READING PREPARED STATEMENT ON RECENT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL AND ANSWERING SINGLE QUESTION WHICH WAS DECLARED "OFF THE RECORD."

2. IN HIS STATEMENT PRESIDENT SAID CHANGE IN PORTUGAL IS FOR THE BETTER AT LEAST SO FAR AS THIS PART OF AFRICA CONCERNED. EVEN DURING LATTER DAYS OF DR. SALAZAR THERE WAS SOME IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITIONS OF AFRICANS IN MOZAMBIQUE. MUCH GREATER IMPROVEMENT TOOK PLACE AFTER CAETANO TOOK OVER. FROM NEW GOVERNMENT HE EXPECTS "STARTLING CHANGES, UNBELIEVABLE CHANGES." TOWARD NEW GOVERNMENT MALAWI WILL FOLLOW SAME POLICY "OF GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS" ADOPTED TOWARD SALAZAR AND CAETANO GOVERNMENTS. THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN MALAWI'S POLICY TOWARD PORTUGAL, TOWARD MOZAMBIQUE. WHAT HAPPENED
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PAGE 02 BLANTY 00592 031953Z

IN PORTUGAL VINDICATES MALAWI POLICY. SINCE INDEPENDENCE

HE HAS USED WORDS "DIALOGUE, CONTACT, DISCUSSION." GENERAL SPINOLA CALLED TO POWER BECAUSE AMONG ALL TOP MILITARY MEN IN PORTUGAL, HE ALONE HAS COURAGE TO SPEAK "LANGUAGE OF DIALOGUE, CONTACT AND DISCUSSION AND NOT JUST OF GUNS, BULLETS AND BAYONETS." WE ARE AT BEGINNING OF MAJOR DRAMA IN POLITICAL HISTORY OF THIS PART OF AFRICA AND MALAWI HAS CONSTRUCTIVE IF SMALL ROLE TO PLAY.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT TIMING OF CHANGE IN MOZAMBIQUE, PRESIDENT SAID HE COULD NOT TELL WHEN CHANGE WOULD COME BUT MALAWI COULD INFLUENCE SPEED OF CHANGE. WHAT IS NEEDED IS PATIENCE AND RESTRAINT. IN PAST HE TOLD PORTUGUESE FACE TO FACE THAT STAND PAT THEORY IS NONSENSE. HE USED SAME TACTICS IN PRIVATE TALKS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERS. THROUGH HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH MANY OF CIVILIAN LEADERS RUMORED TO BE IN LINE FOR MINISTERIAL POSTS IN NEW GOVERNMENT, MALAWI WILL HAVE INFLUENCE. WHEN HE RETURNED TO MALAWI, WHITES IN ALL SOUTHERN AFRICA WERE TERRIFIED FEARING INDEPENDENCE MEANT EXPULSION OF ALL WHITES. WHEN MALAWI ACTED OTHERWISE, THEY RELAXED. MALAWI'S POLICIES HAVE HAD INFLUENCE WITH MANY PORTUGUESE IN MOZAMBIQUE AND EUROPE.
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